BRILL

Reterritorializing Subjectivity

Brian Schroeder
Rochester Institute of Technology

Abstract

The philosophies of Deleuze, Guattari and Levinas are taken up in an effort to advance the ethical, political, and technological implications of how we interpret, inhabit, and territorialize the Earth. The difference between their views on the relation between immanence and transcendence and their respective analyses of the face and faciality are brought to bear in addressing the questions of ethics, politics, and values in relation to the constitution and liberation, or resingularization, of subjectivity. The contemporary world has produced to a historically unprecedented degree a tension between machinization and wildness—both of which are expressions of the inhuman. Somewhere in between this difference, transversing the borderlines between the human and inhuman, lies a possible way for rethinking the relation between subjectivity, identity, difference, and singularity.

Keywords

Deleuze, Guattari, Levinas, territorialization, inhuman, face, machine, ecosophy, violence

> In truth, there are only inhumanities; humans are made exclusively of inhumanities, but very different ones, of very different natures and speeds.
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> —Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari[1]

> This earth is anything but a sharing of humanity. It is a world that does not even manage to constitute a world; it is a world lacking in world, and lacking in the meaning of world.
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> —Jean-Luc Nancy[2]

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[1] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 190.

[2] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), xiii.

Nihilism and Schizophrenia

Modern theories of subjectivity are predicated on the knowable unity of the self, which until the end of the nineteenth century was essentially a given. Following Nietzsche's critique of the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of the ego-self and Freud's extension of that into the domain of psychology, though, the identity of the subject was radically called into question, precipitating on some registers the dilemma or crisis of so-called postmodernity. This erosion of the ordered and bordered *terra firma* of modernism is what Nietzsche refers to as European nihilism. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this has resulted in an increasingly schizophrenic[3] social self continually produced by the capitalist-state machine that has overcoded the human with the machinistic. In an early publication, Foucault prefigures this analysis: "It would be absurd to say that the sick machinize their world because they project a schizophrenic world in which they are lost; it is even untrue to say that they are schizophrenic, because this is the only way open to them of escaping from the constraints of the real world.... The contemporary world makes schizophrenia possible, not because its events render it inhuman and abstract, but because our culture reads the world in such a way that we cannot recognize ourselves in it."[4] This schizophrenia is alienation not only from the activity of production and the productions of activity but also from the very language of society itself. The schizophrenic self is a stranger in a real world, with no assurance of objectivity in the inner world of self-identity. The social and economic constraints placed upon the individual in the contemporary capitalist regime of signs reaches a critical destructive maximum in certain territories such as the urban ghetto (as witness the growing rise of gang formation and the forms of violence that attend it). The boundaries that once separated, defined, and insulated certain territories from others are destabilizing, or at least shifting. The borderlines demarcating cities, suburbs and rural regions are no longer distinct as the electronically engineered language of contemporary culture distorts the artificial territorial borders of contemporary

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[3] Deleuze and Guattari employ an idiosyncratic use of the term "schizophrenic." In the context of their usage, it refers to the multiplicity of signs, signifiers, and voices that bombard the subject through various channels such as the state, culture, advertising, media, etc. It is clear that they are not referring to the standard psychoanalytic use of the term, as a mental disease or disorder able to be treated through pharmaceuticals and/or therapy. In fact, it is precisely against such remedies that they align themselves. The problem, they would argue, often lies not so much in the individual but in the various machine-assemblages that continually produce various conflictual dilemmas.

[4] Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1976), 84.

society. The boundaries between the natural world and the socially engineered and manufactured world are becoming increasingly blurred. On the social, economic and environmental levels, the problems of the city are now progressively the problems of suburbia and rural regions.

Foucault's conjecture that "perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian"[5] implicitly encompasses Deleuze's arguably more radical and imaginative work with his collaborator and fellow conspirator, Guattari. Although a reference to the past century, Foucault's observation may well be *unzeitgemässe* and may prophetically enunciate instead the face of the present millennium, an era rife with new possibility and hope but also fraught with great uncertainty and foreboding. At the heart of this tension lies the relation between, on the one hand, a slow but steadily emerging global awareness of the Earth's fragility and, on the other, the rapid, seemingly unstoppable movement of modern technology, accused by many of fostering and perpetuating the current global environmental crisis.

In considering how the concepts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity are affected by this tension, the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari is taken up here in relation to that of Levinas, in an effort to advance the ethical, political and technological implications of how we interpret, inhabit and territorialize the Earth. What they all have in common is that they are all profoundly ethical thinkers of difference, although this is not to gloss over the significant differences that exist between them, of which perhaps the most glaring concerns the relation between immanence and transcendence. It is not the intention here to reconcile that difference; rather, it is precisely within this tension that their respective analyses of the face and faciality come to bear in terms of addressing the questions of ethics, politics, and values in relation to the constitution and liberation, or resingularization, of subjectivity. Noting that subjectivity "is not a natural given any more than air or water," Guattari forcefully and succinctly frames the question at hand: "How to produce it [i.e., subjectivity], capture it, enrich it, permanently reinvent it in a way that renders it compatible with Universes of mutant value?"[6] The contemporary world has produced to a historically unprecedented degree a tension between machinization and wildness—both of which are expressions of the inhuman. Sociologically bounded by the predominance of a technologically-oriented worldview and economy

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[5] Michel Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 165.

[6] Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 135.

and demarcating a projection into the postrational or hyperreal, postmodernity[7] also signals at times a reversion back to the prerational—to the wild, the borderless. Somewhere in between this difference, transversing the borderlines between the human and inhuman, lies a possible way for rethinking the relation between subjectivity, identity, difference, and singularity.

Earth and Machinism

An emerging and growing critical area of concern for contemporary society and thinking is the relationship between the Earth and humanity, and thus between the *bios* or life-place and technology. Common language often conjoins, confuses, or even conflates the meaning of the terms "machine," "mechanism," "machination," "mechanization," "technology," and "industry," thereby obfuscating critical conceptual differences between them. "Common sense suggests that we speak of the machine as a subset of technology," writes Guattari. "We should, however, consider the problematic of technology as dependent on machines, and not the inverse. The machine would become the prerequisite for technology rather than its expression."[8] According to Deleuze and Guattari, "everything is a machine,"[9] at least for the schizophrenic who is in touch with the body. In their terminology, even a sociopolitical proposal such as bioregionalism, which is based on the idea of ecological and environmental sustainability, would be a "diagram" for an "abstract machine" occupying the "plane of consistency . . . in other words, the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows."[10] Abstract machines are characterized by their matter and function and have their own mode of organization, as opposed to the reterritorialized socio-technological machines that overcode the plane of consistency with the plane of organization.

Deleuze and Guattari attempt to formulate a positive politics of creativity based upon a principle of "accelerated deterritorialization." In general, deterritorialization refers to any process that disrupts a given relational context, rendering that context abstract and hence unreal while simultaneously setting

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[7] I follow here Ihab Hassan's distinction between postmodernism and postmodernity. See his "From Postmodernism to Postmodernity: The Local/Global Context," *Philosophy and Literature* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 1–13.

[8] Ibid., 33.

[9] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 2.

[10] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 43.

the stage for possible other configurations (for example, the colonial imperialist practice of eradicating a conquered peoples' symbols, beliefs and rituals and replacing—that is, *re*territorializing—them with their own as a means of subjugation). Although the terminology of territorialization is usually applied to political and psychological scenarios, Deleuze and Guattari also provide a more environmentally-oriented description of deterritorialization: "Movements of deterritorialization are inseparable from territories that open onto an elsewhere; and the process of reterritorialization is inseparable from the earth, which restores territories. Territory and earth are two components with two zones of indiscernibility—deterritorialization (from territory to the earth) and reterritorialization (from earth to territory). We cannot say which comes first."[11] Yet while the continual interplay of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is crucial, "what is primary is an absolute deterritorialization, an absolute line of flight, however complex or multiple—that of the plane of consistency or body without organs (the Earth, the absolutely deterritorialized)."[12] The Earth, the great Body without Organs,[13] is without a traceable beginning or end, composed of an unpredictable middle ground of movements, flows, processes, singularities, rhythms, lines of flight, becomings-other.

In *The Three Ecologies*,[14] Guattari proposes three ecosophic registers: mental ecology, social ecology, and natural ecology, with the emphasis on importance in that order. Mental ecology is a cross-boundary process, instantiating the interaction between social and natural ecologies. Social ecology follows from the resingularizing activity of mental ecology and constitutes the local aspect of the universal (which is not to say global) extension of thinking. Natural ecology is employed in the conventional understanding of the term. The task at hand is the reorientation, which is to say, the reterritorialization of technology toward humanity. This is not tantamount to dismantling technological culture. Verena Andermatt Conley phrases it well: "Ecological problems are not as much the result of technology as of dominant modes of valorization of human activity translated into political and economic programs."[15] The deterritorialization requisite for such reterritorialization is found in the mental

[11] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 85–86.

[12] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 56.

[13] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 50; also see 9–16ff.

[14] Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Athlone Press, 2000).

[15] Verena Andermatt Conley, *Ecopolitics: The Environment in Poststructuralist Thought* (London: Routledge, 1997), 94.

ecological register that constructs new existential territories, on both the interior (cognitive) and exterior (physical) levels, by mapping or diagramming various possibilities of geophilosophy and ecodwelling. However, notes Guattari, "it is less a question of having access to novel cognitive spheres than of apprehending and creating, in pathic modes, mutant existential virtualities.... [A] genuine virtual ecology...requires, on the contrary, a refoundation of political praxis."[16] In other words, processes of territorialization are universal in their abstract extension and selective strategies, but they are resistant to the aggressive concrete globalization of economic interests manipulating technology and peoples for the sake of capital gain.

Bringing about this shift in the *mental* ecological register means radically critiquing and abandoning the subject-object bifurcation that subtends traditional accounts of subjectivity and epistemology. In the chapter titled "Geophilosophy" in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari declare: "Subject and object give a poor approximation of thought. Thinking is neither a line drawn between subject and object nor a revolving of one around the other. Rather, thinking takes place in the relationship between territory and the earth."[17] Territory, intertwined with landscapes, is what is primordial, not the species, human or otherwise. Territory is the Natal or source of all assemblages and species, organic and inorganic. Territorialization is, to use Guattari's fertile term, a "chaosmosis"—an infinite process of enunciative acts, lines of flight, and becomings-other continually creating new territories and new regions. The meaning of territorialization, however, extends beyond the merely geographic—it invokes an existential and valuative dimension: the formation of *new* values and meaning, which "only have universal significance to the extent that they are supported by the Territories of practice, experience, of intensive power that transversalize them."[18] Mental ecology constructs and reconstructs the relation between the body and space-time, perpetually obviating or postponing the media-powered notion of objectivity belying the State-economic assemblage's insistence that technology is ultimately capable of controlling the chaos of nature. It is not technology per se, however, that limits and renders immobile ecological awareness and subjective freedom but rather the imposition of the capitalist ideology of profit over all. Mental ecology is not about mere communicational transformations; it is concerned with new existential arrangements, cartographies and diagrams that do not attempt

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[16] Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 120.

[17] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 85.

[18] Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 130.

to resist the contingencies of possible plateaus and fluid regional movements but rather coevolve with them.

What constitutes a viable strategy to bring about this new mental ecology? According to Guattari, "making yourself machinic." This is the way that one "can become a crucial instrument for subjective resingularization and can generate other ways of perceiving the world, a new face on things, and even a different turn of events."[19] Žižek picks up on this and emphasizes that, rather than seeing how this "deprives us of human potentials, one should there focus on the liberating dimension of this externalization: the more our capacities are transposed into external machines, the more we emerge as 'pure' subjects, since this emptying equals the rise of substanceless subjectivity. It is only when we will be able to rely fully on 'thinking machines' that we will be confronted with the void of subjectivity."[20] But what does it mean to become machinic? First of all, one must draw a strict distinction between the terms "machinism" and "mechanism," which are often conflated in meaning or used interchangeably. Contrary to what might be commonly thought, machinism encompasses both the organic and the inorganic; it is a living concept as opposed to the dead or inert concept of mechanism: "Machinism," writes Guattari, "implies a double process—autopoietic-creative and ethical-ontological (the existence of a 'material of choice')—which is utterly foreign to mechanism. That is why the immense machinic interconnectedness, the way the world consists today, finds itself in an auto-foundational position of its own bringing into being. Being does not precede machinic essence; the process precedes the heterogenesis of being."[21] In other words, to state that everything is a machine is not to state that the machine constitutes an essence. A machine does not have an essence; it is a process, an interconnecting with other processes, other machines, other organisms. Thus "the machine, every species of the machine, is always at the junction of the finite and infinite, at this point of negotiation between complexity and chaos."[22] In this sense, machines are not purely instrumental but also ontological. But is the machine *metaphysical*, in Levinas' interpretation of the term as signifying an ethical dimension or relationality? Provocatively, from Guattari's standpoint this seems to be a possibility.

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[19] Ibid., 97.

[20] Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 16.

[21] Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 108.

[22] Ibid., 111.

Machinism and Faciality

If nature is a machinic process, and if values are indeed immanent to machines, then is it possible to postulate a transcendence in the sense of an openness or receptivity to the needs or demands that the inhuman other imposes on the human? What will constitute a genuinely progressive relationship with technology that remains environmentally sensitive? Guattari offers this observation: "Rather than adopting a reticent attitude with respect to the immense machinic revolution sweeping the planet (at the risk of destroying it) or of clinging onto traditional systems of value—with the pretense of re-establishing transcendence—the movement of progress, or if one prefers, of process, will endeavor to reconcile values and machines. Values are immanent to machines....All systems of value—religious, aesthetic, scientific, ecosophic...—install themselves at this machinic interface between the necessary actual and the possibilist virtual."[23] Although values and ethics are not the same, both are enunciative. What is important about a machine is not its vitality but rather its "enuciative singularity" that ruptures all formal and actual equilibria, instantiating a processual relation with exteriority and alterity, with the human as well as inhuman—in short, with the biospheric totality. Enunciation is speech, and it is only the face (*le visage*), as Levinas observes, that speaks. The notion of faciality is also present in the thinking of Deleuze and Guattari, who correlate it geographically with the landscape,[24] expanding this concept beyond the purely physical terrain to include the refrain (*ritournelle*), that is, the array of melodic and rhythmic elements that form the boundaries of milieus and territories in specific places.

Can the notion of the face, even in the idiosyncratic sense rendered by Deleuze and Guattari, be reasonably extended to the machine? Let us consider this proposition: If nature is indeed a machinic process, and if nature can be properly apprehended as a genuine other, then it follows that nature construed as machinism is open, at least theoretically, to the possibility of ethical transcendence, if by that transcendence one also includes the alterity of the natural world along with the human face. (The status of this possibility is another question altogether, however, and one that is beyond the purview of the present reflections). Furthermore, all machinic assemblages are multiplicitous in their dimensionality not only in terms of their transversal or bridging relations with other machines but also internally, harboring "enunciative

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[23] Ibid., 54–55.
[24] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 172–73.

zones that are so many desiring proto-machines."[25] On the interpretation, desire appears to be, at least potentially, immanent in machines.

According to Levinas, the ethical relationship between the self and the other (*l'autrui*) is one of desire. At a particular stage of his writing, he characterized this desire as "metaphysical" insofar as it connotes the rupture and subsequent extension of subjectivity beyond the boundary of its sovereign selfsame identity. This radical exposure of the self to the other's incessant call to respond is the psychic space wherein the desire for the other begins and occurs as responsibility for the other. Guattari inflects the meaning of responsibility thus: "The new aesthetic paradigm has ethico-political implications because *to speak of creation is to speak of the responsibility of the creative instance with regard to the thing created*, inflection of the state of things, bifurcation beyond pre-established schemas, once again taking into account the fate of alterity in its extreme modalities. But this ethical choice no longer emanates from a transcendent enunciation, a code of law or a unique all-powerful god. The genesis of enunciation is itself caught up in the movement of processual creation."[26] Similarly, while the ideas of ethics and creation figure prominently in Levinas, especially in his earlier language, Levinas maintains that he is not referring to any ontotheological conception of God. Transcendence indicates for him the ethical responsibility that attends creation—in other words, that is *produced* in the face to face interaction between the self and the other. Transcendence is not the movement of thought back to God but instead is the realization, the creation, of divinity within immanence.

Facialization and Reterritorialization

Subjective identity is determined by one's place within the social grouping, whether it is the nation, territory, province, region, neighborhood, or components such as the tribe, clan, phratry, gang, or pack. The modern concept of the ego, both exalted and repressed by capitalism, produces a particular type of schizophrenia resulting in an unstable social equilibrium, a "metastable state" from having "gone over to the large-scale social machine."[27] Ironically and contradictorily, in the name of individuality, late capitalist society ultimately vanquishes the true proper name (the US state-machine, for example, first responds to the coded identity of the social security number).

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[25] Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 52.
[26] Ibid., 107; italics added.
[27] Ibid., 35.

The quantification of the multiple by the social assemblage delimits a field that *neutralizes* the significance of the face for Deleuze and Guattari; but for Levinas, the meaning of the ethical, present in the exposure of the face that conveys to consciousness the absolute separation between the self and the Other, is a distance produced as a "psychism," as the idea of infinity.[28] The Levinasian interpretation of the face is the trace of the passing of an "absolutely heteronomous past," a prehuman "*signification without a context*."[29] The face is not the mask of the individual; it is the locus of the alterity that *is* the social multiplicity. Similarly, declare Deleuze and Guattari, "faces are not basically individual" as they essentially denote "redundancies of significance or frequency." That is to say, "the face constructs the wall that the signifier needs in order to bounce off of."[30] In any event, the face is a phenomenal surface, simultaneously transmitting the signification of the "absolutely other" (as, for example, in Levinas) or "something absolutely inhuman."[31] But whatever the source, the face overcodes the bodily head; the question now is the *meaning* of this codification.

The abstract machine also produces the face but does so in such a way as to render the face itself abstract, as inhuman, as a mask.[32] Whether it is the becoming-animal over-codification of the head in primitive societies or the abstract serialization of the individual in capitalist societies, the inhumanity of the face/mask continually refers back to a chaosmotic landscape—a surface of holes, planes, pores, mats—a landscape-alterity often awaiting exploitation by the forces of production.

The groundless ground of chaosmosis is the flux of shifting veiled appearances, of faces expressing the endless uniqueness of singularity. Singularity is not identity. As Levinas reminds us, "no one is identical with himself. Beings do not have identity; faces are masks."[33] He writes elsewhere, though, that the face "is not a form concealing, but thereby indicating a ground, a phenomenon that hides, but thereby betrays, a thing itself. Otherwise, a face would be one with a mask, but a mask presupposes a face."[34] Is Levinas saying two

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[28] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 54.

[29] Ibid., 23; italics in the original.

[30] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 168.

[31] Ibid., 172.

[32] Ibid., 181.

[33] Emmanuel Levinas, "The Ego and the Totality," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 34.

[34] Emmanuel Levinas, "Meaning and Sense," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 102.

different things regarding the relation between the face and mask? If faces are indeed masks, he claims, it is only because the face is the epiphanic appearance of the absolutely other, is the personal other (*l'absolument autre, c'est autrui*).[35] But the face signifies more than the saying that is present within and through it. This overflowing of meaning is the continual production of the uniqueness of singularity, of subjectivity, of the paradox of the other in the same. The mask presupposes the face just as subjectivity presupposes its constituting relationship with alterity.

To locate the tension between these two accounts of facialization: According to Deleuze and Guattari, the face is a constantly changing phenomenon—a reterritorialization; but for Levinas, the face is a constant, the meaning of which is ethical in the form of an imperative. Territorialization is ontologically mappable, but is it also metaphysically anarchic in the sense of being a process whose origin is epistemologically irrecuperable, being rhizomatic, and thereby precisely also (at least in part) ethically significant since it allows the alterity of the other to remain intact?

"The deterritorialization of the body implies a reterritorialization on the face," write Deleuze and Guattari; "the decoding of the body implies an overcoding by the face; the collapse of corporeal coordinates or milieus implies the constitution of a landscape."[36] Unlike Levinas, though, who remains for the most part anthropocentric in his analysis of the face,[37] Deleuze and Guattari correlate the face with the landscape, "which is not just a milieu, but a deterriorialized world": no longer merely relative to the head but to the strata of signification and subjectification: "*absolute* deterritorialization."[38] Facialization is a process of reterritorialization. Similarly, the face of the landscape, or as Ed Casey writes, the "wildscape,"[39] is continually transformed by natural

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[35] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39.

[36] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 181.

[37] While Levinas clearly privileges the human face-to-face relationship, the locus of all ethical interactions, in which transcendence and immanence meet producing in its wake the ethical signification, he does not completely limit the concept of the face to that of the human: "The human face is completely different and only afterwards do we discover the face of an animal" (Emmanuel Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas," in Robert Bernasconi and David Wood, eds., *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other* (London: Routledge, 1988), 172. Elsewhere Levinas states: "One cannot entirely refuse the face of an animal. It is via the face that one understands, for example, a dog. Yet the priority here is not found in the animal, but in the human face" (ibid., 169).

[38] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 172; italics in the original.

[39] This term is used by Edward S. Casey in *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 201ff.

and plastic forces. The meaning of the face is determined therefore by the ground or grounds within which it is present, whether it is the wilderness, the countryside, the suburbs, or the cities.

If there is any human destiny at all, write Deleuze and Guattari, it is to "escape the face" in order to get "on the road to the asignifying and asubjective."[40] The territorialization of classically defined subjectivity, whether it is the individual or the body politic, from its place in the classical polis to the present State-economic assemblage, therefore needs to be overcome, since it is within the political parameters that violence most manifests itself as war, the most blatant and perverse application of technology. If there is an ethical imperative to territorialization then this is it. The problem is, however, that territorialization is inseparable from the continual rhizomatic interplay of the lines of flight of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. This resonates with Levinas' position that the ethical and the political are never fully commensurate.

The face as a politics is the expression of the politics of immanence, which assigns to the world rather than to a transcendent other the power to order and create meaning. However, "if the face is a politics, dismantling the face is also a politics involving real becomings, an entire becoming clandestine. [It] is the same as breaking through the wall of the signifier and getting out of the black hole of subjectivity."[41] And if it is indeed the case that the ethical signification of the face is not contingent upon human projects, politics does play a necessary, if flawed, role for a greater reception of the other. The dismantling of the face, the revelation of the face as mask, is a revelation of the *inhumanity* of the face, whether it is the trace of an absolutely other or a becoming-other.

Reterritorializing Wildness and Machinism

Despite our recent techno-machinic identities, Deleuze and Guattari note that still "we're not far from wolves."[42] The specific reference is to the famous psychological case of the Wolf-Man. Freud, they maintain, does not recognize what every child knows to be the case, namely, that wolves always travel in packs. Freud therefore misdiagnoses the Wolf-Man's case from the very start because he begins with the classic metaphysical assumption of the primacy of unity or identity as ground, and extends that bias into the arena or field of

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[40] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 171.
[41] Ibid., 188.
[42] Ibid., 28.

social relations. Reinterpreting the Wolf-Man's dream for him, Freud insists that he did not hear several wolves but rather a single dog, that is, the voice of the father. But Freud does not see that "in becoming-wolf, the important thing is the position of the mass, and above all the position of the subject in relation to the pack or wolf-multiplicity."[43] In other words, Freud misses the point that subjective identity is constituted by the social or the multiple.

Wolves are prime examples of the schizo position; while remaining intact, their individuality constantly shifts with regard to role in the pack—that is, to the others—through the continual deterritorialization or lines of flight of the pack's movement. For example, the Wolf-Man's human identity, his proper name, is not as secure as his becoming-wolfness. His name is intimately bound with the libidinal assemblage of the social machine, not with the oedipalized family structure. His madness is the result of being unable to communicate his desire, his need, to become wild in order to escape his childhood memories of the terror of his family's experience with the Bolsheviks. And even though he is readmitted back into society, his madness never quite dissipates; Freud perhaps even exacerbates it.[44]

In a very real sense, as Nietzsche reminds us, the human is an animal who has forgotten that this is what it is. The conquering of nature is not just the domestication of the wild, but the absolute repression of the silent call to become wild. Is this the calling that the Wolf-Man hears but to which Freud turns a deaf ear? Has the human over-repressed the inhuman component of its identity? Excluding the extreme violence of war, which occurs for the most part on other grounds, is this a major reason for much social violence?

Subjectivity, especially in the tightly wound urban setting, with its norms and regulations for respective behavior (also necessary for the survival of the animal pack), revolves around the position of the subject to the larger social assemblage. Struggles for territorial dominance have increasingly given way to the senseless pursuit of violence for its own sake, as witness the gang phenomena of "wilding" and "smash and steal" in recent years. The violence endemic to gang warfare, for instance, and its often random spilling over into society, results in part from the repression of the natural urge to become wild that all humans carry within themselves. Without adequate outlets, this wildness takes the form of destructive rage, often turning within when external outlets are denied. Thus it can also produce forms of madness, exacerbating the

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[43] Ibid., 29.
[44] On the "wild, lawless otherness" of the Wolf-Man, see William Desmond, *Philosophy and its Others: Ways of Being and Mind* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 201–5.

schizophrenia already induced by capitalist society. Dismantling the face is a response to a violent politics of the face, but it is also a dangerous operation and one that may well also entail madness as a consequence.

How should we approach the madness we all carry to some degree within ourselves, the silent call to become wild, and disengage ourselves periodically from the linguistic overcoding of society that reinforces the hierarchical dichotomies of civilized and wild, human and inhuman, order and chaos, sanity and madness, truth and error, good and evil, law and crime, and masculine and feminine, to name but a few? According to Deleuze and Guattari, the *refrain* offers a possible solution to the potentially violent and dangerous outbursts of a shattered economy and a frustrated madness. The nonaggressive basis of the territory shared by the human and inhuman alike, the refrain is the natural art or expression of the world that preserves autonomy, thus continually the moment of a violent backlash within the territorial assemblage. The refrain preserves and defers the "critical distance between two beings of the same species,"[45] a distance that is philosophically marked by Nietzsche and given ethical significance to by Levinas. It is not, however, only a question of keeping a secretly or potentially threatening other at bay; "it is a question of keeping at a distance the forces of chaos knocking at the door."[46] Rhythm marks this critical distance.[47]

Perhaps the themes of wilderness, our primal ground, and ritual, an ancient means of ordering the primal chaos associated with natural phenomena, provide some meaningful clues here. The refrain provides a means for remember-

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[45] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 319.

[46] Ibid., 320.

[47] This is something that every outdoors person knows. Since animals respond as much audibly as visually, and perhaps even more so (not to mention the olfactory senses, which itself brings in a whole other range of questions and possibilities), the approach in the woods or toward the stream is vitally important. For example, unlike their hatchery-born cousins, native trout are acutely aware—at a distance—of the incautious angler's approach. The crack of the twig that drops sediment into the stream, their territory, or the shadow that should not be there, disrupts the rhythm, the flow of things. Another example: when moving about in bear territory, and in particular grizzly country, respect is everything. A bear often will false charge just to mark its boundaries. It has been reported that assuming a subservient sidelong stance to avoid direct eye contact is enough to quell the bear's approach. All said and done, though, bears are simply unpredictable. Death may follow as easily as the inescapable adrenaline rush. Interestingly, in *Of Wolves and Men* (New York: Scribner, 1979), Barry Lopez states that just the opposite is the case with wolves: a wolf will stare down its opponent, and if a certain fear is demonstrated, the wolf will often attack to the death even though it is not hungry. Cattle are often prone to such attack because the wolf perhaps perceives them as an unworthy and weak entity and therefore undeserving of life.

ing the place and role of ritual action. The refrain is fundamentally territorial and thereby a territorial assemblage; it "always carries the earth with it . . . it has an essential relation to a Natal, a Native."[48] The movement of cosmological chaotic force to terrestrial force is expressed socially as the relation between *nomos* and *ethos* that shares the mutual feature of being a distribution of space in space. Plateau 11 ("1837: Of the Refrain"), in *A Thousand Plateaus*, begins with a Nietzschean notion of chaos out of which are born milieus and rhythms. Chaos is essentially ecstatic and the *Abgrund* from which various orders, arrangements, and codes issue forth. There are various types of milieus (exterior, interior, intermediary, annexed) that are coded, in a flux of periodic repetition, which is to say, in a perpetual state of transcoding or transduction. All living things are *composed* of milieus that are "open to chaos." Rhythm is a decisive way in which a milieu responds to chaos. Deleuze and Guattari cite birdsongs as an example of this, but one can also include wolf howls, which orient the individual wolf in relation to the dispersed pack, and by extension, musical forms such as rap, endemic to the hood or turf to which one belongs. The importance of rhythm is also not lost on Levinas: "Rhythm represents a unique situation where we cannot speak of consent, assumption, initiative or freedom, because the subject is caught up and carried away by it. The subject is part of its own representation. It is not so even despite itself, for in rhythm there is no longer oneself, but rather a sort of passage from oneself to anonymity. . . . Rhythm certainly does have its privileged locus in music, for the musician's element realizes the pure deconceptualization of reality."[49] Rhythm always occurs and functions in between various milieus, not only marking or signing territorial boundaries against intrusion by the stranger, but perhaps more importantly in delineating the territorial boundaries of individuals within the same social grouping.[50]

Rhythm is also the interior response to both the madness of chaos and the madness of schizophrenia. To be human is to be constantly confronted with the possibility of madness, which is brought about occasionally by a nihilism that paralyzes the will and thus prevents the individual from being understood.

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[48]) Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 312.

[49]) Emmanuel Levinas, "Reality and Its Shadow," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 4.

[50]) It is not so much the presence of a foreign entity that arouses suspicion but the comportment, the rhythm of the intruder. In the hood it is a matter of whether the stranger walks the walk as well as talks the talk. Distance and pace are definite signs of belonging and trespassing. In the wild, vision is often secondarily employed as a means of adjudicating friend or foe. But it is generally the face to face interaction, particularly among animals, that determines the outcome of the confrontation. The glance of the eye, is it oblique or direct? The tilt of the head's as significant as the lilt of the tread. The stranger, the other, is unpredictable, always a surprise.

As Lacan reminds us, "human existence cannot be understood without refer-ence to madness, nor could we be human without carrying madness within as the limit of our freedom."[51] Madness is but another form of communication, even if it results in a certain *non*communication. This is what Freud fails to realize in the Wolf-Man.

Reterritorializing subjectivity is predicated on a transition from tracing the precoded arborescent imagery that has guided the "progress" of Western development thus far, to mapping the rhizomatic tendencies of the uncon-scious that are being forcefully unlocked by dominant logic of tracing, repro-duction, and representation in the current social assemblage. It has often been said there is a method to madness, and for Deleuze and Guattari it *is* "a ques-tion of method: *the tracing should always be put back on the map.*"[52] To rethink the meaning of power, the radical solution of the metaphysical principle of root-tree is contingent on a re-examination of the unconscious desire to become intense, to become animal, to become wild, and to relate this realiza-tion to the issues of present-day social, economic, and political arrangement.

If some forms of social violence are indeed the result of repressing the native instinct to be wild, what are the mechanisms or strategies that will allow the natural urge to become wild to be without erupting into violence? In the past the Dionysian urges were given their due in sacred festivals, but the carnivals of today are for the most part but pale ineffectual ghosts of those great events. Part of the problem may well be a result of the over-domestication of nature by civi-lized society, a process that has effectively insulated us from the state of nature, but that has also repressed the silent call to become wild. With the natural wild increasingly threatened to the point of extinction by capitalist production and human population growth, the city streets are becoming the new wild.

Perhaps in any future revaluation of values, the meaning of wildness itself needs to undergo a fundamental revaluation. Deleuze and Guattari point the way toward such a revaluation, and Levinas offers what is arguably the most profound revaluation of a ground for ethics in recent times. Perhaps a middle ground is needed—an ethical ground that grounds itself in the literal ground of the Earth, a groundless ground that responds not only to an ethical imper-ative located in the face of the Other but also to the call to become wild. Perhaps only in heeding such a call can the seemingly indomitable will to machinization be reterritorialized as an active, affirmative manifestation of the will to power as a resingularized will to remain faithful to the Earth.

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51) Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 94; translation mine.
52) Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 13; italics in the original.